

A portrait of State Senator Robert Mayer, a middle-aged man with grey hair, smiling. He is wearing a brown suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red and gold paisley tie. A gold pin is visible on his lapel.

State Senator Robert Mayer

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Special Session

Capitol Report, Fall 2005

Important Legislation from the 2005 Session

SB 287 - School Funding

This legislation funds schools more equitably and guarantees Missouri schools will have the funding to provide our students with an adequate education. Over the next several years, annual education funding will increase by more than \$800 million.



Sen. Mayer works on Senate legislation on the chamber floor.

Our previous system allocated funds according to property values and taxes in each of Missouri's 524 school districts. Because of the difference in property values, wealthier districts had more to spend than did poorer ones.

Missouri's new formula, however, accounts for these differences and funds our schools on the basis of student need.

This new funding system determines an adequate funding figure for each district and ensures that districts have enough to spend on students. Also, \$15 million has been set aside for grants for smaller districts.

This legislation will bring Missouri schools into the 21st century and will ensure that our children receive the education they need and deserve.

HB 393 - Tort Reform

Another vital piece of legislation that passed this year was a bill that makes needed changes to Missouri's tort system.

House Bill 393 will improve Missouri tort law and create an environment that is fairer for state doctors and businesses. The bill lowers caps on jury awards for non-economic damages and reforms the "joint and several liability" provision, which can require some defendants to pay more than their share of liability.

The legislation also prevents "venue shopping," a process in which trials are moved to jurisdictions that give the highest awards. These reductions in outrageous jury awards will create a system that is fair for Missouri businesses and doctors.

SB 1 - Workers' Comp

My colleagues and I have also worked to eliminate corruption in workers' compensation claims for the sake of Missouri businesses. Senate Bill 1 will reduce awards to workers who are injured while violating workplace safety standards. This legislation also places the burden of proof on employees, a measure that will further reduce illegitimate claims.



Key Legislation Backed By Sen. Mayer

SB 420 - Child Safety

Senate Bill 420, which I sponsored, contains a variety of provisions improving the safety of our children. Under the bill, courts will not be permitted to return children to homes in which the parents have been convicted of certain sexual offenses. This provision ensures that our children will not be forced to reunite with the very people who have abused

them and sent them into state custody. Another measure allows courts to appoint standby guardians, who temporarily assume the duties of a legal guardian.

These measures will make our children safer while creating a better legal system in Missouri.

SB 168 - Housing Disputes

This legislation, which I co-sponsored, will help build a better Missouri. It will help stem the

development of our lawsuit-driven society while relieving a costly burden on our overloaded judicial system.

Senate Bill 168 works to provide ways other than litigation to resolve disputes between homeowners and building contractors. The bill institutes methods of mediation to settle claims without having to resort to costly legal battles.

Making Progress in the War on Meth

In the 2005 legislative session, my colleagues and I have made further advances in the fight against methamphetamine. Meth producers now face major hurdles in obtaining key ingredients to cook the drug. SB 10, which I co-sponsored, requires that some over-the-counter cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine, such as Sudafed, only be purchased from pharmacists or registered technicians.

All purchases will now be logged in a database available for

police inspection. The legislation primarily addresses pseudoephedrine-based products in the dry-tablet form because they are easier to grind and are typically used in the meth-cooking process. Gel capsules and syrup elixir do not easily lend themselves to the production of meth.

States that have enacted similar laws, such as Oklahoma, have witnessed a dramatic decrease in meth. Some reports have stated that Oklahoma's law, the first to restrict access to

pseudoephedrine products, has reduced meth production in that state by 80 percent in less than one year. Meanwhile, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas and Texas have also passed similar legislation.

Less meth means fewer people becoming addicted to this drug and less harm to themselves, their families and their neighbors. By limiting meth manufacturers' access to these chemicals, we can work to counter an affliction that has crippled communities throughout Missouri.

The 2005 Special Session

The 2005 special and veto sessions came to a close Sept. 15. After just two weeks, the General Assembly passed important pro-life legislation and saved Missouri's workers' compensation system.

Lawmakers approved legislation I co-sponsored allowing lawsuits to be filed against people who help minors cross the state line to receive abortions. Senate Bill 1 enforces Missouri law requiring anyone under age 18 to receive parental approval before getting an abortion.

SB 1 also requires abortion clinics to have privileges to provide obstetric and gynecological care at hospitals within 30 miles of the clinic. These measures will work together to protect our children, born and unborn.

A drafting error in a workers' compensation bill was also corrected. The wording error would have detrimentally affected the workers' compensation system itself. However, the measure was fixed, ensuring that Missouri workers will have proper coverage.

Lawmakers also approved a resolution declaring opposition to a planned "spring rise" of the Missouri

River. The federal government has proposed releasing more water during springtime to increase reproduction among birds and fish. However, downstream farmers have opposed the plan because of the increased risk of flooding. Commercial carriers and hydroelectric plants are also concerned because the spring rise will result in low water levels in following seasons, which will threaten their production.

Several other measures were also addressed. Bills affecting the posting of public officials' addresses and phone numbers online, creating new crimes for adults who allow minors to drink on their property, and prohibiting the distribution of prescription drugs on school property have

been improved. Conflicting language concerning drunk-driving laws has also been resolved with House Bill 2.

Lawmakers also completed a veto session that began September 14. The General Assembly chose to let the governor's vetoes stand.

It was a pleasure to serve my constituents once again in Jefferson City.



Sen. Mayer (right) and Sen. Jason Crowell discuss legislation on the Senate floor.

On Time. Balanced. No New Taxes.

Missouri's 2005-2006 Spending Plan

Distribution of Each General Revenue Tax Dollar

FY 2006 After Veto Missouri Operating Appropriations
General Revenue: \$7.159 Billion



Budget Basics

- \$113-million increase for the education foundation formula.
- Full funding of the First Steps program for 8,000 developmentally disabled infants and toddlers.
- Medicaid funding for hospice care, ambulance payments, oxygen and respiratory equipment, wheelchairs, diabetic supplies and prosthetics, subject to appropriations.
- \$13.8 million for the state's veteran's homes.
- \$11.5-million increase for child care for low-income working parents.
- A wage increase for home- and community-based workers who provide services for the elderly and adults with disabilities.

A Note on Senator Mayer

Senator Rob Mayer was born Feb. 25, 1957, in Cape Girardeau and was educated in the Dexter Public School System. He received his Bachelor of Science in Political Science from Southeast Missouri State University and earned his Juris Doctorate in 1996 from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Sen. Mayer was admitted to the Missouri Bar in October 1997.

Sen. Mayer married Nancy Tuley on July 29, 1978. They have three sons: Jason, Dustin and Daniel. Sen. Mayer is a member of the First Baptist Church in Dexter and serves as a deacon and adult Sunday school teacher. He is also a member of several honorary organizations.

Senator Mayer practices as an attorney and was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives in 2000 and the State Senate in 2004. He has also worked as a farmer, broadcaster and industrial engineering technician.

Senator Mayer serves on the Appropriations; Education; and Agriculture, Conservation, Parks and Natural Resources Committees. He is also a member of the Joint Committee on Education, the Joint Committee on Economic Development Policy and Planning, and the Senate Interim Committee on Title Insurance, and he serves as vice-chair on the Judiciary and Civil and Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.

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